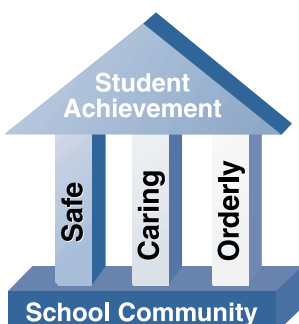


# Appendix A: The Building Blocks of Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools



A school culture is shaped by the values and attitudes of its community members, including school staff, supporting organizations and agencies, students, parents and the wider community. In a safe, caring and orderly school community the deep, personal commitment of its members to creating and maintaining a respectful, welcoming and nurturing environment is explicitly stated, and incidents of harassment or intimidation are addressed quickly, effectively and in ways that restore or strengthen relationships.

British Columbia schools are striving to develop positive, welcoming school cultures and are committed to fostering optimal environments for learning. Members of these school communities share a commitment to maintaining **safe, caring and orderly schools**. They strive to:

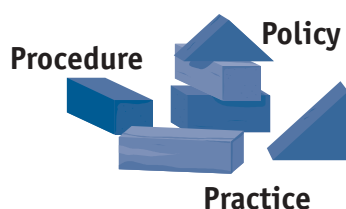
- develop positive school cultures and focus on prevention
- use school-wide efforts to build “community,” fostering respect, inclusion, fairness and equity
- set, communicate and consistently reinforce clear expectations of conduct
- teach, model and encourage socially responsible behaviours that contribute to the school community, solve problems in peaceful ways, value diversity and defend human rights
- assume responsibility, in partnership with the wider community, for resolving critical safety concerns
- work together to better understand issues such as bullying, intimidation and harassment, racism, sexism and homophobia, and to learn new skills to respond to them
- respond consistently to incidents in a fair and reasoned manner, using interventions that repair harm, strengthen relationships and restore a sense of belonging
- participate in the development of policies, procedures and practices that promote school safety
- monitor and evaluate their school environments for evidence of continuous improvement
- recognize and celebrate achievements, while acknowledging areas that need improvement

## Recommended Resources

*Focus on Harassment and Intimidation: Responding to Bullying in Secondary School Communities*

See – Chapter 4/  
Taking Action, Part II  
Developing and  
Evaluating Policies  
and Procedures  
(Pages 41 – 50)

Detailed excerpts from relevant legislation are provided in **Appendix E**.



#### **Potential Topics for Policy and Procedure Development**

Abuse/Neglect Reporting  
 Anaphylaxis/Severe Allergies  
 Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation  
 and Other Forms of Violence  
 Codes of Conduct  
 Communicable Diseases  
 Communication  
 Critical Incidents  
 Cultural Diversity  
 Custody Assurance  
 Equipment/Building Safety  
 Emergency Procedures  
 Field Trip Safety  
 Inter-Agency Protocols  
 Human Rights  
 Medical/Health Alerts  
 Reporting Procedures  
 Substance Use  
 Theft and Vandalism  
 Training  
 Vehicle/Bus Safety  
 Visitors/Agents in Schools  
 Volunteer Drivers  
 Weapons  
 WCB Requirements

## **Guiding Legislation**

As school districts and schools undertake the important work of addressing safety, they work within the framework of federal and provincial legislation, including the *Constitution Act*, the *Canadian Charter of Rights*, the *Multiculturalism Act*, the *British Columbia Human Rights Code*, the *Official Languages Act*, the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* and the *School Act*.

## **The “Building Blocks”**

Policy, procedure and practice are the **building blocks** for creating safe, caring and orderly school environments.

### **Policies**

establish clear expectations and set direction for all members of the school community, encourage appropriate action and provide a basis for sanctions in response to inappropriate action. They encourage pro-active and preventive endeavours as well as remedial and restorative approaches when problems do occur. Effective policy is developed in collaboration with the entire community, widely communicated, consistently implemented and regularly reviewed.

### **Procedures**

are official, school-wide protocols and mechanisms that establish and communicate a way of doing things. Procedures describe the method for carrying out policy directions – the steps to be followed in conducting the business of maintaining safe, caring and orderly schools. They provide the formal operational guidelines for staff, students and visitors in the school. Effective procedures support the actions of individuals and groups working together to realize the goals of the school community.

### **Practices**

describe the day-to-day actions and experiences of individuals at school. Effective practices reflect guidelines for safe, caring and orderly schools. They foster positive and healthy school cultures, nurturing social and emotional environments and success for all members of the school community.

## Attributes of Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools

Schools that are safe, caring and orderly provide the necessary climate for student achievement. At the policy level these elements are intertwined and interdependent.

### In a safe, caring and orderly school...

#### Policies

- Policies provide the basis for development of effective procedures and practices based on research and data
- Board and school policies address the interests of all members of the school community and all aspects of safe, caring and orderly schools
- Policies allow for timely responses to emerging issues
- Policies are developed with the input and involvement of school community stakeholders in consultation with knowledgeable resource people
- Board and school policies, procedures and practices are consistent, using similar language and supporting one another
- Policies are clearly articulated to all members of the school community
- Policies are communicated to the wider community on a regular basis using a variety of means of communication
- A cycle of policy review is established; district and school data are used in the review and planning process

## A Safe School

A **safe school** is one in which members of the school community are free of the fear of harm, including potential threats from inside or outside the school. The attitudes and actions of students, staff and parents support an environment that is resistant to disruption and intrusion, and ensures a constant focus on student achievement.

### In a safe school...

#### Procedures

- Procedures address the goal that all members of the school community are safe at school
- Procedures are consistent with school board policies
- Procedures undergo continuous review and improvement as promising new practices emerge
- Evidence is used to monitor how procedures are contributing to school safety
- Emergency procedures are in place
- The school board and schools play a role in community emergency response plans
- Responses to critical incidents are pre-planned, effective and comprehensive
- Planned responses exist for alcohol and other prohibited substances
- Planned responses exist for weapons
- Search and seizure protocols are consistent with legislation and best practices
- Procedures exist that address communicable diseases and other health/medical alerts
- Procedures are developed in consultation with community health professionals
- Procedures are in place to address issues of child protection
- All staff members know child protection laws and procedures
- Reporting of unsafe conditions and actions is actively encouraged
- A reporting system is in place; it is clear, accessible and non-threatening
- Responses to reports are consistent and effective
- Measures taken to resolve problems are recorded
- Students know who to approach for help in any school-related context
- Procedures are in place to address visitors to the school
- Visitors are aware of guidelines before visiting the school
- Protocols and relationships are developed with local police and other agencies to establish how the school and community will partner to promote safety and address safety concerns
- Workers' Compensation Board Occupational Health and Safety regulations are met or exceeded
- Staff members know WCB requirements and protocols

## Goals of Safe Schools

- Students and other members of the school community are free from harm.
- Students learn and work in an environment that is resistant to disruption and intrusion, and focused on learning.

### In a safe school...

#### Practices

- Regular emergency drills indicate successful emergency preparedness
- During emergencies and critical incidents, individuals carry out their responsibilities, members of the school community feel supported and a stable environment is maintained
- School personnel respond quickly and effectively to reports of unsafe conditions or actions
- All members of staff are capable and confident when they receive a report
- Students and others feel supported in reporting unsafe conditions, actions or potential incidents, and they report when issues arise
- An effective school-wide strategy is in place to reduce the number of incidents of bullying, harassment and intimidation
- Problems with prohibited items and substances are rare; when they occur, they are addressed in a way that does not affect the safe operation of the school
- Offenders are treated fairly and are referred for counselling help when appropriate
- Communicable disease outbreaks are controlled through good communication, clear roles and inter-agency collaboration
- Post-outbreak follow-up occurs
- Provisions for students with health alerts are made; related emergencies are handled appropriately
- Records are kept of all health emergencies and interventions
- Suspected cases of abuse and neglect are reported promptly, in accordance with legislation and locally established protocols
- Students are only released into the custody of persons who have appropriate authority
- Suspicious persons are reported to police immediately
- Visitors to the school are easily identifiable and their purpose and location are known to school officials

## A Caring School

A **caring school** is one in which members of the school community feel a sense of belonging, and have opportunities to relate to one another in positive, supportive ways. All aspects of school life embrace and reflect diversity. The school is an inviting place for students, staff, parents and visitors.

### In a caring school...

#### Procedures

- Procedures promote the dignity and equality of all members of the school community, support diversity and foster a sense of belonging for students and others
- School programs are developed that consider the needs of all students
- Procedures are in place for examining inequities, disparities and barriers to student achievement
- Staff, students and parents from diverse groups are encouraged to participate actively in school initiatives and decision-making
- Students are given opportunities to assume leadership roles
- Services are in place to support individuals who are at risk of harm
- Discipline procedures are preventive and restorative where possible, rather than merely punitive
- Complaint and appeal processes are clear and accessible
- Staff members address complaints and concerns about perceived unfair treatment with sensitivity and skill
- Procedures and protocols facilitate partnerships with community agencies to address common issues and provide support for the diverse needs of students, staff and others

## Goals of Caring Schools

- Students and other members of the school community feel confident that the school community embraces individuality and diversity.
- Students and other members of the school community feel they belong and that members of the school community relate to one another in positive, supportive ways.
- Schools are a welcoming place for students, staff, parents and visitors.

### In a caring school...

#### Practices

- The environment is inviting and welcoming, fostering feelings of acceptance and belonging for members of the school community
- Members of the school community relate to one another in supportive ways
- Students and other members of the school community speak with pride about their school
- Students are given structured opportunities to show generosity and support to fellow students, staff and members of the greater community
- Regular opportunities are offered to learn about and celebrate human rights, diversity in the community and other key elements of caring schools
- Training is provided to continually develop in school staff the knowledge, skills and attitudes to promote human rights and foster caring in schools
- Opportunities are created for training with members of the wider community
- The wider community is involved in cultural diversity awareness events and education
- Teachers instruct in ways that are responsive to different learning styles and different ways of meeting learning outcomes
- Visitors and guests feel welcome in the school and that their presence is appreciated
- School personnel maintain regular contact with parents as a means of relaying important information and establishing rapport that will support student achievement
- Schools actively network with the wider community to identify and link to resources that support the diverse needs of members of the school community
- Members of the school community are assisted in learning about helpful resources in the wider community and are supported in accessing them

## An Orderly School

An **orderly school** is one in which members of the school community are informed about and exercise their rights and responsibilities as school citizens. Expectations about acceptable behaviour, respect and decorum are generally understood. Responses to violations are based consistently on sound principles and are appropriate to the context.

### In an orderly school...

#### Procedures

- A school-wide program is in place to help maintain a positive climate in all aspects of school life
- Clear expectations for acceptable conduct are established in each school
- Codes of conduct reflect the values and expectations described in school board policy
- Codes of conduct are developed with participation from parents, students, teachers, school administrators and other school support staff
- Expectations for acceptable conduct are made known to students, parents and school staff, as well as to temporary staff and visitors
- Protocols for conduct while acting as ambassadors of the school exist and are made known to students, parents, coaches and involved members of the greater community
- Consequences for prohibited actions are clear and consistent, allowing room for judgment based on context
- Students are encouraged to participate in the development of meaningful consequences for violations of the established code of conduct
- Procedures are established to record incidents of student conduct breaches
- Relevant data are used as procedures are reviewed and revised



## Goals of Orderly Schools

- Students and other members of the school community recognize their own rights and the rights of others, and exercise their responsibilities as school citizens.
- Students and other members of the school community conduct themselves in a manner that reflects an understanding of acceptable behaviour, respect and decorum.
- Students and other members of the school community have confidence that problems will be resolved in a consistent, appropriate and timely manner.

### In an orderly school...

#### Practices

- School-wide efforts help to maintain a positive climate in all aspects of school life
- Members of the school community are familiar with expectations outlined in the school code of conduct
- Orientation to school board and school policy and procedures is provided for new members of the school community
- Members of the school community treat one another with respect and courtesy
- Members of the school community carry this level of decorum with them while acting as ambassadors of the school (e.g., on out-of-school trips, at school-sponsored and other public events)
- No member of the school community dresses in a manner or possesses personal property at school that offends, intimidates or otherwise detracts from a supportive learning environment
- Guests and visitors to the school are treated with respect and courtesy, including visiting students and student athletes and their coaches
- Students go out of their way to host or guide guests and visitors
- Consequences for prohibited actions are applied consistently, allowing room for judgment based on context
- Students are encouraged to participate in the development of meaningful consequences for violations of the established code of conduct
- Members of the school community express concerns in appropriate ways and to appropriate personnel, in accordance with school/school board policy and procedure
- Incidents of student breaches of the code of conduct are recorded, including information about how these were resolved
- Relevant data are used as procedures are reviewed and revised